

Record of decision taken under delegated powers by a council officer



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| Title: | GREENER FUTURES – ACCELERATING THE INTRODUCTION OF A ZERO EMISSION BUS FLEET |
| Divisions Affected: | Divisions within the borough/district areas of Epsom & Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead, Tandridge |
| Key Decision: | Yes |
| Reason Key: | Over £1m; and Affects more than two Divisions of the County Council |
| Decision taken under delegation by virtue of: | <p>On 24 November 2020 Cabinet considered a report on 'Accelerating the introduction of ultra-low / zero emissions buses and community transport vehicles into Surrey'. Cabinet resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the establishment of a Surrey Ultra-Low and Zero Emission Scheme that will accelerate the introduction of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles onto a range of bus and community transport services, inclusive of supporting industry investment be supported. 2. That the Surrey Ultra-Low and Zero Emission Scheme detail and implementation, once agreed by the Capital Programme Panel, be delegated to the Executive Director, Environment, Transport & Infrastructure, the Executive Director of Resources and the Director of Law & Governance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, including moving the required capital funding from the Capital Pipeline to the capital budget so that the programme can moved forward. <p>In respect to resolution 2, a decision to be taken under delegated powers by council officers is required.</p> |

Summary

The Cabinet report of 24 November 2020 (Accelerating the introduction of ultra-low / zero emissions buses and community transport vehicles into Surrey), made the two resolutions as set out above.

Now agreement has been secured from the Capital Programme Panel (11 January 2022), the Cabinet resolution requires that the final delegated decision be taken, including moving the required capital funding from the capital pipeline to the capital budget so that the programme can moved forward.

This is a record of that delegated decision.

Decision made

Decision made:

It was AGREED that:

1. That the Surrey Ultra-Low and Zero Emission Bus Scheme with Metrobus be approved, including moving the required capital funding of £26.8m from the Capital Pipeline to the capital budget so that the programme can moved forward.

Reasons for Decision:

This programme sits within the wider corporate Greener Futures project, and is designed to support Surrey's Community Vision for 2030 in the ambition to ensure that "Residents live in clean, safe and green communities, where people and organisations embrace their environmental responsibilities"

To demonstrate Surrey's commitment to working with partners to embrace safer, greener communities, the County Council is committed to working with the industry to help introduce zero and ultra-low emission vehicles across the transport sector, and to help further reduce the carbon footprint of the overall transport network.

This decision follows the clear resolution from Cabinet to work towards the ambition of an ultra-low/zero emission bus fleet by 2030, supporting our Climate Change Strategy. This is consistent with our response to the declared Climate Emergency and support the ambitions set out in the Council's new (draft) Surrey Transport Plan and Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The environmental impact of these vehicles will be significant and help to encourage a modal shift change within the community transport sector.

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| Decision taken by: | Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment, Transport & Infrastructure Leigh Whitehouse, Executive Director of Resources Paul Evans, Director of Law & Governance |
| Decision taken on: | 17 January 2022 |
| To be implemented on: | 28 January 2022 |

Alternative options considered

Option 1: Do Nothing

PROS

Staff resource can be deployed on other programmes.

Funding can be invested in other services.

CONS

The County Council has declared a climate emergency and committed to a series of actions that are needed to achieve net zero carbon emissions, set out in the Climate Strategy.

It is a challenge for the transport sector to formulate adequate capital budgets to fund vehicle replacement programmes due to the impact of the global pandemic. Without this investment from the County Council, the sector will struggle to keep up with the push to move to clean and green fuel for their fleets.

The number of hydrogen fuel cell (or electric) buses in Surrey will be inconsequential

We will be unable to contribute effectively towards our strategic priorities, providing greater sustainable transport options to residents in Surrey.

Not investing in a public transport will leave some communities finding it increasingly difficult to access key services such as health and food shopping.

There could also be an increase in private car usage and modal shift to public transport options would not be achieved.

Non-investment would also see an increase in rural isolation and loneliness, having a negative effect on mental health wellbeing.

It is predicted that under a business-as-usual scenario there would be no reduction in emissions but an approximate 1% growth by 2050.

SCC will not satisfy part of our duty as a local authority to improve air quality, especially in Air Quality Management Areas, for transport provision and will not be able to contribute effectively towards our strategic priorities of providing more sustainable and cleaner transport options for residents.

Option 2: Deliver part of the project or extend the programme lifetime

PROS

Some environmental impacts and cost savings can be delivered for parts of Surrey.

The programme could be accelerated and delivered in a shorter timescale, but less improvements will be delivered as a result.

Some of the hydrogen fuel cell buses and other supporting measures could be delivered in a reduced number of locations (with appropriate Cabinet / Cabinet Member prioritisation), reducing emissions and improving user experience in those areas alone.

The unallocated pipeline funding could be deployed elsewhere or the capital borrowing not taken up and / or the programme could be elongated and delivered over a much longer timeframe.

CONS

A reduced level of environmental benefits and cost savings will be realised. These may not be effective on their own and will not have the impact of a greater level of investment. This prevents a holistic approach being taken to move the sector toward cleaner, greener fuels.

The Council will not satisfy part of our duty as a local authority to improve air quality, especially in Air Quality Management Areas, for transport provision and will not be able to contribute effectively towards our strategic priorities of providing more sustainable and cleaner transport options for residents.

Not investing in a meaningful manner would deter the boroughs and districts of Surrey in match funding the transition to electric vehicles. If it is not a priority for the County Council then they may not feel the need to match our commitment.

There could also be an increase in private car usage and modal shift to public transport options would not be achieved if buses are not viewed as attractive by existing and potential users.

Non-investment could also see an increase in rural isolation and loneliness, having a negative effect on mental health wellbeing

Extending the programme timeframe would delay the reduction in emissions and miss the 2030 target.

Preferred Option: Deliver all four phases of rural mobility and electrification of community transport as set out in the 24 November 2020 Cabinet report

PROS

Delivery of all the outcomes and benefits as described will help to fulfil the Council's objectives to be a carbon neutral Council by 2030 and county by 2050.

The programme of work would accelerate the Council's ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions, with 46% emanating from the transport sector.

Closer working with our bus operator partners will foster stronger relationships and efficiencies as the Council responds to the National Bus Strategy.

The investment in hydrogen fuel cells would demonstrate the County Council's commitment to our residents that we are looking at viable, greener alternatives for our complete transport network.

CONS

We will increase the number of assets we manage and will need to maintain the existing staffing numbers to do so.

The financial cost to the council.

Summary of any financial implications

The cost of proceeding with the zero emission scheme (£26.8m) is included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The scheme has been approved by Cabinet, and the detail agreed by the council's Capital Programme Panel. The Council will retain ownership and overall control of the assets it has purchased, and ongoing operating costs will be met by the bus company.

Declarations of conflicts of interest

None

Consultation/Process Followed

The Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure was consulted.

Background Documents**Exempt:**

Cabinet Report, 24 November 2020 (Ref 185/20):
Accelerating the introduction of ultra-low / zero emissions buses and community transport vehicles into Surrey

No